



AZVRS MSP PROGRAM – CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. With the current pilot program with the Sonoran Center, Employment First, and other parties, what are their findings?

A: Information regarding the pilot can be found on the Sonoran Center website under the Customized Employment Pilot tab: <https://sonorancenter.arizona.edu/customized-employment-pilot>

2. With each service under 1.1.2- what are the estimated timelines (hours) used to complete each service.... this would be helpful, so we are prepared for the CSP meeting when discussing expectations and time commitments for the VR client and other team members

A: Customized Employment is an individualized service, and the amount of time required varies based on the VR Client's strengths, interests, support needs, informed choice, employment goals, and the complexity of employer negotiations. For that reason, Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation does not prescribe a set number of hours for each phase of service.

Rather than establishing hourly expectations, Arizona VR has chosen to use service milestones to support timely progress while preserving the flexibility necessary for person-centered service delivery. This approach allows providers to tailor services to each individual's needs while maintaining accountability for meaningful progress.

Providers should focus on delivering quality, individualized services that advance the VR Client toward competitive integrated employment rather than attempting to meet a predetermined number of service hours.

3. What is the cost of the initial 10-hour training by Sonoran or is it free as part of their grant to provide training? Additionally, the annual ACE Refresher training- is there a cost or is that free?

A: At this time, no costs will be incurred to selected vendors as it relates to the training.

4. When are the training classes offered?

A: Training dates will be announced after the Interested Vendor selection process has been completed. Selected providers will receive information regarding required onboarding activities, training schedules, and implementation timelines before accepting referrals. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation will provide sufficient notice to allow organizations to prepare staff for participation.

5. Can provide clarification/descriptions on the roles of Sonoran and Employment First with Customized Employment Services?

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation administers and oversees the Customized Employment service.

The University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities (Sonoran Center) serves as Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation's technical assistance partner and supports provider onboarding, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and implementation activities.

The Arizona Office of Employment First at the Sonoran Center provides statewide leadership related to



Employment First systems change, workforce development, and cross-system collaboration. While the Office supports statewide employment initiatives, it does not administer Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Each organization has a distinct role while working collaboratively to strengthen employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

6. **Section 2.2.2 – Client Service Plan:** The Vendor shall schedule the Client Service Plan meeting with the VR Client, referring VR Counselor, and the Customized Employment Team within fourteen (14) business days of receiving the assignment from the MSP.

Section 2.2.5 – Discovery: The Vendor shall initiate Discovery activities within ten (10) business days following completion of the Client Service Plan.

Section 2.2.6 – Job Development Planning: Within twenty-five (25) business days of completing Discovery, the Vendor shall facilitate the Job Development Planning Meeting, marking the transition from Discovery to Job Development and ensuring alignment among the VR Counselor, VR Client, and Customized Employment Team.

Section 2.2.7 – Job Development and Negotiation: Within five (5) business days following the Job Development Planning Meeting, the Vendor shall begin outreach to potential employers that align with the VR Client's strengths, interests, abilities, support needs, workplace and environmental preferences, and employment themes.

3.2.2 Performance Standard #2 - Completion Rate: During the Vendor's second year of providing Customized Employment Services, seventy-five (75%) of VR Clients accepted for Customized Employment Services shall secure Competitive Integrated Employment that aligns with their employment goal within twelve (12) months of starting Customized Employment Services.

Based on these requirements, it appears there are specific timelines providers are expected to meet, even though the pace of services is intended to be individualized. Could you please clarify how providers should reconcile these required deadlines with the expectation that services progress according to each client's individual pace? For example, if a client requires additional time before moving to the next phase of the process, how should providers remain compliant with the required timelines?

A: These timelines reflect the "planning" elements associated with each phase and ensure that the service continues to progress. Vendors will continue to support the client through an individualized lens and will work to facilitate progress within each phase of the service, so that the VR Client continues to feel engaged and that the process moves at their individual pace. The timelines noted ensure that the vendor is progressing through the phases of Customized Employment. If there is a VR Client that requires a pause in services, that should be discussed with the VR Counselor and team.

7. We are accustomed to providing customized employment through comprehensive neurorehabilitation, albeit on a smaller scale. Given that these clients will have significant support needs, they often require a multidisciplinary team—including Physical, Occupational, and Speech therapies—to assist with cognitive strategies, communication, and physical accommodations in the workplace.

My primary question is how these specific therapies are integrated into the vocational program to ensure seamless support, if they are at all. Because our Vocational Specialists are also speech, OT and PT therapists, Cerebrations can incorporate some of this within our JDR and WAT programs, and potentially Customized Employment. However, we cannot provide the full extent of support these clients may require within the scope of the contracts. Historically, when our JDR clients need Speech or OT, they are referred to their medical insurance, which unfortunately does not cover therapy tailored specifically to workplace issues. Ultimately, I am

trying to gauge whether Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) therapies will be included for these crucial, work-related skills, if needed and appropriate.

A: Customized Employment is a Vocational Rehabilitation service designed to achieve competitive integrated employment. While information and recommendations from occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, behavioral health, or other professionals may inform employment planning, these therapies are not included as part of the Customized Employment service. When work-related therapy or rehabilitation services are determined to be necessary and appropriate, the VR Counselor will consider available resources and coordinate services consistent with the individual's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation policy, and funding requirements. Providers are encouraged to collaborate with members of the Customized Employment Team, including medical or rehabilitation professionals, when doing so supports successful employment outcomes and the VR Client has provided appropriate consent.

8. How many vendors are you looking to add to this service during this initial phase?

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation intends to select ten (10) qualified providers during the initial implementation of Customized Employment. The number of selected providers will be based on statewide service needs, geographic coverage, organizational readiness, and available implementation resources. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation's goal is to establish a strong foundation for high-quality, consistent service delivery before expanding provider capacity over time. Additional opportunities to participate may be offered as the service continues to expand statewide.

9. Will this replace JDR or will it be another option added to services?

A: JDR is a separate VR service that is a traditional model of employment services. Customized Employment is very different and is a national model designed for those with the most significant disabilities. Customized Employment includes an intensive Discovery service that aims at determining the individuals' strengths, preferences, support needs, etc. After Discovery, employment themes are identified and then drive the next steps of employer engagement, with the goal of matching the client's strengths and interests with the unmet needs of employers.

10. Is a DDD contract required or helpful for this service?

A: Having a DDD contract is very helpful when considering becoming a vendor. It ensures that there is a seamless transition for those VR Clients who need extended supports. Although it is not required, it is highly recommended.

11. How does this service get determined for a client VS something like JDR?

A: This service is designed for those VR Clients with the most significant disabilities and whom a traditional employment model may not meet their needs.

12. Do clients meet a specific criteria for a VRC in order to utilize CES vs. JDR?

A: The VR Counselor will work with the VR Clients to determine their individual needs, supports, and goals. Through the Vocational Guidance and Counseling process, the VR Counselor and the VR Client will determine if Customized Employment is the best service for that VR Client to meet their employment goals.

13. Would also love to know what type of training the VRC's are also getting on this?

A: VR Staff have completed a training model that included three (3) phases. All VR Staff have completed Employment First training, Arizona Customized Employment training, and an in-person full day training that was role specific related to Customized Employment in practice.

14. Are there time frames for the milestones?

A: Customized Employment Services includes many different phases from Client Service Plan (CSP) to Extended Supports. This service utilizes a milestone payment for several phases, due to the reporting involved after each phase of service delivery.

15. As I reviewed the newsletters from the perspective of a provider and someone interested in program evaluation, I found it difficult to determine whether the pilot is improving employment outcomes over time. While the newsletters describe activities and implementation, they do not appear to include the measurable outcome data needed for providers, participants, and stakeholders to make informed choices about the effectiveness of the pilot.

The last outcome data I was able to locate appears to be from December 2024. If more current performance data is available, publishing it would be extremely helpful for providers who are evaluating whether Customized Employment is the right service option for the individuals they serve. Having access to current outcome data allows providers to make informed decisions and better counsel job seekers regarding available employment services.

A: This was a pilot that was implemented in partnership with the Sonoran Center. Customized Employment is a service that matches the skills and interests of the VR Client to the unmet needs of employers. Through the pilot, we have learned that this was more than the implementation of a service, it was more about systems change. That takes time. As a new service was piloted across the state, with real VR Clients in rural and urban areas, and across providers, there were challenges that arose such as leadership/staffing changes, VR Client life circumstances, system barriers that caused the pilot progress to be impacted at times. There are currently four (4) VR Clients in job development, and three (3) job proposals are being developed with employers.

16. Will we be able to get a copy of the rubric?

A: The rubric was provided by the MSP to vendors after each Kickoff meeting:

- The rubric consists of the following categories and point allocations.
 - Geographic & Service Coverage — Max Points: 10
 - Organizational Interest & Commitment — Max Points: 15
 - Leadership Support — Max Points: 20
 - Experience Supporting Competitive Integrated Employment — Max Points: 5
 - Workforce Capacity — Max Points: 20
 - Community-Based Service Capacity — Max Points: 15
 - Employer & Community Relationships — Max Points: 10
 - Customized Employment Job Development — Max Points: 10
 - Collaboration — Max Points: 5
 - Organizational Adaptability — Max Points: 10

Total Points: 120

17. How many providers currently are in the pilot and how many members are in the pilot?

A: There are currently seven (7) active VR Clients and one (1) active provider in the pilot.

18. Is the pilot designed for a specific population?

A: Neither the pilot, nor the Customized Employment Service are designed for a specific population. This service is designed to meet the needs of those VR Clients who have the most significant disabilities. Customized Employment Services will be discussed between the VR Counselor and the VR Client, and both will determine if Customized Employment Services is the best fit for the VR Client based upon their needs, career goals, etc. For more information regarding the populations represented in the pilot, please visit: <https://sonorancenter.arizona.edu/customized-employment-pilot>

19. Can this service be virtual and/or in person?

A: This service must be provided in-person.

20. How will VRC's determine which clients should be enrolled in this program vs JDR?

A: VR Counselors will work with their VR Clients to determine their individual needs, goals, and next steps. Together both parties will determine the best service for the VR Client to meet their job goals.

21. Will we receive a copy of the presentation?

A: Yes, all attendees received a copy of the Kickoff Presentation via email. This presentation can also be found on the Customized Employment Services Provide Page: <https://azvrs.knowledgeservices.com/customized-employment-services>

22. Was the pilot provided to specific disabilities group such as DDD?

A: The pilot reflected a diverse group of VR Clients across the state of Arizona. Including rural and urban locations, various disability populations, ethnic groups, ages, and more. The team was intentional in ensuring that participants reflected the diverse landscape of individuals that are served across Arizona.

23. This is available to both youth and adult clients?

A: Yes, this service is available for all VR Clients, including youth and adults.

24. Can we get an overview of the difference between JDR and Customized Employment?

A: Job Development and Retention (JDR) is a separate VR service that is a traditional model of employment services. JDR focuses on preparing VR Clients for current job postings through traditional models of employment. Customized Employment is very different and is a national model designed for those with the most significant disabilities. Customized Employment includes an intensive Discovery service that aims at determining the individuals' strengths, preferences, support needs, etc. After Discovery, employment themes are identified and then drive the next steps of employer engagement, with the goal of matching the VR Client's strengths and interests with the unmet needs of employers.

25. How many providers started in the pilot and if it was more than one (1) what happened to the other providers?

A: The pilot began with three (3) providers, utilizing a staggered start approach, designed to allow for onboarding, training and provider preparedness prior to delivering the service. Throughout the pilot, two (2) providers chose not to move forward for different reasons; including organizational changes, staffing challenges, and other implementation related factors.

26. Were older populations reflected in the pilot? If not will this population be considered for a service like this?
A: The pilot included VR Clients of varying age ranges, including middle aged VR Clients. Customized Employment Services are not limited by age.
27. How many of the participants in the program reach all milestones?
A: At this time, none of the identified VR Clients have completed the full Customized Employment Services. Each VR Client is progressing through the process at different rates based upon their individualized employment goals, support needs, and the person-centered nature of the service.
28. Do you know the average timespan it took for clients to go from job seeking to employment?
A: The Customized Employment Service is still in progress, so that data is not currently available.
29. It seems the biggest challenge of successfully placing a customized employment candidate will be convincing businesses to create positions specifically for client with the most significant disabilities. Will there be training or best practices delivered to Vendors on how we can be successful in this?
A: Employer engagement is a large part of the Customized Employment Service. Vendor orientation will occur during the initial phase after vendors have been selected. Ongoing technical assistance and opportunities for case consultation are intended to help vendors develop confidence and competency in this area.
30. So are the clients paid by the businesses once they are matched?
A: Yes. Customized Employment results in competitive integrated employment. Once hired, the individual becomes an employee of the business and is paid directly by the employer in accordance with applicable federal and state wages and labor laws.
31. What are some examples of positions created specifically for clients in the pilot?
A: The pilot continues to take place and therefore examples are not currently available, as they are still in development. Future examples may illustrate how Discovery findings informed employer engagement, how unmet business needs were identified, and how job duties were negotiated to create mutually beneficial employment opportunities. However, every Customized Employment outcome is individualized, future examples are intended to demonstrate the process rather than serve as models to replicate exactly.
32. Does the vendor find the employer?
A: Yes. Customized Job Development is the responsibility of the provider. Using information gathered during Discovery, providers identify businesses that align with the VR Client's employment themes, build relationships with employers, learn about business needs, and negotiate individualized employment opportunities when appropriate.
33. Will self-employment will be an option for this service?
A: Customized Employment is designed to support competitive integrated employment through negotiated employment relationships with businesses. If self-employment is determined to be the most appropriate employment goal, the VR Counselor will discuss the appropriate service pathway with the VR Client.
34. I realize this is individualized but how long did each phase take on average?
A: The Arizona Customized Employment Pilot is still underway; Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation does not yet have complete data on the average length of each phase of service. Nationally, Discovery often takes

approximately twenty-four (24) to sixty (60) hours, while the time required for Customized Job Development and Job Coaching varies considerably based on the individual's needs and employer negotiations.

35. Will we have ADES and the Sonoran Center's contact information to ask further questions?

A: Yes. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to supporting providers throughout statewide implementation. Providers will have access to ongoing technical assistance and implementation support in partnership with the Sonoran Center following onboarding and Arizona Customized Employment (ACE) training.

36. There are some clients who may, due to their disabilities, only be able to work virtually and need an employment service that goes at their pace. Could they get this under JDR?

A: Possibly. Service selection should always be based on the individual's employment needs, informed choice, and the service most likely to result in successful competitive integrated employment.

37. Can the JDR services be provided virtually?

A: This question relates to Job Development and Retention (JDR) services rather than Customized Employment.

38. Is this a statewide proposed contract?

A: Yes. Customized Employment is a statewide Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation service.

39. Are we required to accept those outside of our county as this is a service that is intended to be done in person?

A: During the Interested Vendor process, organizations identified the geographic areas they are prepared to serve. This will be taken into consideration during the Vendor selection process.

40. How is the family integrated into this program, if at all?

A: Family members, guardians, and other trusted individuals can play an important role in Customized Employment when the VR Client chooses to include them. Participation should always reflect the VR Client's informed choice. The VR Client remains the primary decision-maker throughout the Customized Employment process. Family involvement is intended to strengthen person-centered planning while ensuring that employment decisions remain focused on the individual's goals and preferences.

41. Can the Customized Employment Services be provided virtually?

A: Customized Employment is intended to be delivered primarily through in-person, community-based activities. Certain activities such as team meetings, follow-up communication, or planning discussions may occur virtually when appropriate. However, the core components of Customized Employment, including Discovery observations, community-based activities, informational interviews, employer engagement, and Customized Job Development, rely on in-person participation and should not be replaced by virtual service delivery.

42. Will the follow up email include all the questions asked in this session?

A: Responses to questions during the Customized Employment Services Vendor Kickoff sessions are provided within this FAQ.

43. How much of this service is correlated to the services we were doing prior under the MSP?

A: Customized Employment builds upon many skills that providers have developed through previous employment services, including employer engagement, community networking, collaboration, and supporting individuals in obtaining competitive integrated employment. However, Customized Employment is a distinct

service with its own service specification, required Discovery process, person-centered planning, documentation, and individualized job negotiation strategies. While some concepts may be familiar, providers should not assume that previous employment service models fully align with Customized Employment. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation's required onboarding, training, and technical assistance are designed to help providers transition from traditional employment services to the Customized Employment model while maintaining fidelity to the service.

44. I've read through all of the draft documents for Customized Employment Services. I've actually provided this service before in another state and am really looking forward to (hopefully) getting to do it again! The monthly reports and employment profile all looked ready to publish in my opinion. The only feedback I have is on the service specifications (Exhibit AB):

Section 2.2.5

(5A): I'd suggest also interviewing the client about their ambitions and goals.

(5C): I'd recommend adding in "capabilities" to the list of things that the service provider can observe in the home.

Section 2.2.7

(3E): Expand on what "short-term" unpaid work experience means or set some parameters. In the state that I provided this service for, we had a three month period of "Paid Work Experience" where the VR client was paid by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services. Then after the three months, the employer could choose to move forward with hiring on the VR client as a paid employee or the VR client would move on to a different potential position. I think it would be beneficial to have a specific timeline of how long the VR client could spend in the short-term unpaid role.

A: At this time, Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation has not made a final determination regarding this item. Additional guidance will be provided as implementation planning continues and decisions are finalized.

45. Exhibit AB 1.1.2. 4. (Need Feedback). Does the VR Vendor negotiate with the employers on specific duties, hours, pay rate, and any accommodation or support needed before finalizing VR Client job placement?
- A: Yes. Customized Job Development includes working collaboratively with employers to identify business needs and negotiating employment opportunities that align with both the employer's operational needs and the VR Client's strengths, interests, and support needs.

46. Exhibit AB1 Benefits Counselor: (Need feedback) Does the VR provider select or refer to the VR Client a Benefit Counselor or does the VR Team work together and provide guidance to the individual with disabilities?

A: Benefits Counseling is coordinated through Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation. When Benefits Counseling is determined to be appropriate, the VR Counselor is responsible for authorizing the service and coordinating the referral in accordance with Arizona VR policy. Customized Employment providers play an important role in identifying when Benefits Counseling may be beneficial, discussing the importance of informed decision-making with the VR Client, and collaborating with the VR Counselor throughout the process. Providers are encouraged to discuss the potential impact of employment on public benefits early in the Discovery process and notify the VR Counselor whenever the VR Client expresses concern or would benefit from informed benefits planning. However, providers should not independently arrange or authorize Benefits Counseling services unless otherwise directed by Arizona VR.

47. As I was reviewing the documents, I noticed one opportunity that may help further streamline services and create continuity across multiple service lines. While reviewing the Customized Employment Services specification and Employment Profile, I noticed there is a dedicated Assistive Technology section that asks:

Have Assistive Technology needs been identified?

Is there a need for an Assistive Technology Assessment to be completed?

I really like the addition of this section because it provides vendors with a standardized way to identify and document potential Assistive Technology needs during service delivery.

As I continued reviewing the other Service Specifications, I noticed that Rehabilitation Instructional Services and Job Development & Retention also reference the use of Assistive Technology, adaptive equipment, or modified equipment during service delivery; however, the associated forms do not include a similar section for documenting potential Assistive Technology needs or the need for an AT assessment.

From a continuity standpoint, it may be beneficial to consider adding a similar Assistive Technology section to the applicable forms for those services as well. Creating a consistent process across service lines would:

Standardize how vendors document potential Assistive Technology needs.

Promote continuity across RSA service specifications and reporting forms.

Support earlier identification of barriers that may impact employment outcomes.

Help ensure VR Counselors receive consistent information regardless of which RSA service the client is receiving.

Further streamline referrals when an Assistive Technology assessment may be beneficial.

I believe this small addition could help create a more consistent statewide process while maintaining continuity across the different service specifications.

A: Thank you for this feedback. As we continue to update other the service specifications for other services, we will be sure to keep this in mind.

48. Will there be a set or limited amount of hours authorized dedicated to each aspect of the service (i.e., Discovery, Job Development/Negotiation, etc.)?

A: No. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation intentionally does not establish fixed service hours for individual phases of Customized Employment. The amount of time required for Discovery, Job Development Planning, Customized Job Development, Job Placement, and Job Coaching varies based on the individual's strengths, support needs, informed choice, and employment goals. Rather than assigning hours, Arizona VR established milestone-based expectations that support timely engagement while preserving the individualized nature of Customized Employment.

49. Is there a set or 'ideal' timeline of time for each aspect of the service (i.e., Discovery, Job Development/Negotiation, etc.)?

A: The Service Specification establishes expected milestones and required timeframes for progressing through each phase of service. These milestones promote timely service delivery while recognizing that every VR Client's employment journey is unique. Vendors should use the required milestones as implementation expectations while continuing to individualize services based on the VR Client's needs, informed choice, and progress. When additional time is needed, providers should communicate with the VR Counselor and document the reason for the delay.

50. Can work experiences, informational interviews, and job shadowing all happen at the same time (want to clarify as they are all separate sections on the document to report on)?

A: Yes. Discovery is intended to be a flexible, person-centered process. Work experiences, informational interviews, job shadowing, community observations, and other Discovery activities may occur concurrently when appropriate and when they support the VR Client's employment goals and Discovery process. The activities do not need to occur in a prescribed sequence. Instead, providers should determine the most appropriate timing based on the VR Client's interests, availability, learning needs, and the information still needed to develop meaningful employment themes. Providers should document each activity separately as required, even when multiple activities occur during the same timeframe.

51. 2.1.9: *Schedule at least two (2) phone calls or virtual/ in-person meetings per month with the VR Client, VR Counselor, and the VR Client's Customized Employment Team*, to discuss the VR Client's progress and to address barriers and needed adjustments to maintain alignment with the VR Client's goal(s). Will ROI's be obtained for members on the team who are not VR employees? Will they be provided by the client? This would be helpful to have prior to starting the client.

A: Yes. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation recognizes that effective collaboration often involves individuals and organizations outside of VR, such as family members, guardians, behavioral health providers, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR), educators, or other community partners. Information may only be shared with members of the Customized Employment Team in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements and with the informed consent of the VR Client. When authorization is required, the appropriate Release of Information (ROI) should be obtained before confidential information is shared. The VR Counselor is responsible for ensuring confidentiality requirements are met and will work with the VR Client and provider to obtain the necessary authorizations.

52. 2.3.3: All personnel or subcontractors who provide Customized Employment Services must successfully complete a minimum of *ten (10) hours of required Key Competency Training* through the Sonoran Center prior to providing Customized Employment Services. When will this be provided/is there a schedule?

A: Selected providers will receive information regarding training dates, registration, participation expectations, and onboarding requirements before accepting Customized Employment referrals.

53. The Vendor's ongoing skills development for personnel and/or subcontractors, including ten (10) hours of annual required professional development (e.g., annual ACE Refresher Training, Customized Employment Services training, disability-specific training, Employment First, cultural competencies, and/or other trainings for employment services); Will all training opportunities be free? Will a certificate be provided?

A: At this time, Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation has not made a final determination regarding this item. Additional guidance will be provided as implementation planning continues and decisions are finalized

54. 2.2.3: During the Client Service Plan Meeting, facilitate a collaborative, person-centered approach that includes:

1. Introduction to Customized Employment Services, including review of the Customized Employment *Experience Orientation video*, if not previously viewed;

2. Overview of Customized Employment Services, timelines, and expected outcomes;

3. *Initial discussion of the potential impact of employment wages on disability benefits;*

Would a job coach be able to be present for benefits counseling/meetings? Are there trainings provided to job coaches other than the quarterly DB 101 through WID?

A: Yes. With the informed consent of the VR Client, the Customized Employment provider or Job Coach may participate in Benefits Counseling meetings when their involvement supports coordinated employment planning. Participation allows the provider to better understand how benefits planning may influence employment goals, support strategies, and ongoing service coordination. However, providers are not expected to deliver Benefits Counseling unless they are independently qualified to do so. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation recognizes the importance of benefits education and will continue to explore opportunities to strengthen provider knowledge through training and technical assistance. In addition to publicly available resources, Arizona VR may provide implementation guidance specific to Customized Employment as the service expands statewide.

55. c. *For VR Clients with immediate funding* for Extended Services: Confirm availability and coordinate the start of Extended Services;

d. *For VR Clients without immediate funding for Extended Services:* Work with the VR Counselor and the VR Client's Customized Employment Team to identify alternative sources of support and develop an interim, or alternative plan, to maintain employment stability; Will information for Extended Services and if they have immediate funding be provided at the beginning?

A: Whenever possible, Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation will share available information regarding anticipated Extended Services during the Customized Employment process. Early identification of potential long-term supports helps the Customized Employment Team plan proactively and supports a smoother transition after Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation services conclude. When funding is not immediately available or has not yet been confirmed, providers should work collaboratively with the VR Counselor and the Customized Employment Team to identify alternative resources and develop an interim plan to promote employment stability.

56. All personnel who provide CE Services must successfully complete a minimum of 10 hours of required Key Competency Training through the Sonoran Center. *Is this required to be in person in Tucson or is this able to be completed virtually?*

A: The ACE Training includes both self-paced online learning and in-person, applied cohort-based learning designed to build competency in delivering Customized Employment Services.

57. All personnel must successfully complete the Arizona Customized Employment (ACE) Training Program and receive a Certificate of Completion prior to providing CE Services. Initial ACE Training includes virtual instruction and onsite technical assistance that includes applied learning, observation, coaching, and feedback. Vendor personnel providing CE Services must complete an annual ACE Refresher Training through the Sonoran Center. *Is there a cost associated with this? How many hours are needed to complete this?*

A: To assist providers with planning, Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation estimates approximately ten (10) hours to complete the ten (10) Competency Modules and approximately forty (40) hours to complete the Arizona Customized Employment (ACE) Training which aligns with ACRE competencies. The ACE Training includes both self-paced online learning and in-person, applied cohort-based learning designed to build competency in delivering Customized Employment services.

58. On CSP: Has the MSP New Client Referral Form been reviewed with the VR Client, VR Counselor, and VR Client's Customized Employment? Does this mean we, vendors, must review the new client referral prior to CSP Meeting?

A: Yes. Providers should review the referral information before the Client Service Plan meeting so they can prepare for a productive discussion with the VR Client and the Customized Employment Team.

59. Introduction to Customized Employment Services, including review of the Customized Employment Experience Orientation video, if not previously viewed.

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation will provide the Customized Employment Experience Orientation video referenced in the Service Specification.

60. Is KS planning to provide a video of orientation or do we need to create one?

A: Providers should not develop their own orientation materials.

61. "Trusted Individual identified by VR Client" Would it be possible to consider Family Member or Parent and/or Guardian Representative? This could be the main contact in case of an emergency.

A: The term "Trusted Individual" is intentionally broad and may include a family member, parent, guardian, advocate, friend, or any other person identified by the VR Client to participate in the Customized Employment process. Arizona VR intentionally chose broad language to support person-centered planning and respect each individual's support network.

62. On Discovery MPR: "Client facing," What does this mean?

A: Within the Discovery Monthly Progress Report, "client-facing" refers to time spent directly interacting with or providing services to the VR Client as part of the Discovery process.

63. On Employment Profile: I feel like this form would already be outlined in CPS and the monthly progress report, which could reduce the burden of administrative tasks.

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation intentionally designed the Employment Profile to serve as the comprehensive summary of Discovery findings. While some information may appear in multiple documents, each form serves a different purpose.

The Client Service Plan establishes service expectations and coordination.

Monthly Progress Reports document ongoing activities and progress.

The Employment Profile synthesizes Discovery into a comprehensive picture of the individual's strengths, interests, support needs, employment themes, and recommendations that guide Customized Job Development. The Employment Profile serves as the bridge between Discovery and Customized Job Development and is not intended to duplicate other reports.

64. On Job Development and Negotiation Monthly Progress Report: This could combine Discovery MPR and Job Placement report. On Job Coaching and Stabilization Monthly Progress Report: Would it be possible to include this to "center of summary" or CES's overall monthly progress report? (e.g.: Discovery MPR, Job Development and Negotiation MPR, and Job Coaching and. Stabilization MPR into one MPR for each CSP).

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation intentionally designed the Employment Profile to serve as the comprehensive summary of Discovery findings. While some information may appear in multiple documents, each form serves a different purpose.

The Client Service Plan establishes service expectations and coordination.

Monthly Progress Reports document ongoing activities and progress.

The Employment Profile synthesizes Discovery into a comprehensive picture of the individual's strengths, interests, support needs, employment themes, and recommendations that guide Customized Job Development. The Employment Profile serves as the bridge between Discovery and Customized Job Development and is not intended to duplicate other reports.

65. Customized Employment Service Specifications Service Requirements 2.2.10: While vendors are responsible for coordinating and facilitating the transition to extended services, will this need to be initiated by the whole Customized Employment team or will the vendor be responsible for initiating the transition.

A: The Customized Employment provider is responsible for initiating and coordinating the transition to extended services. This includes engaging the appropriate members of the Customized Employment Team as early as possible to support a smooth transition. While all team members may not need to participate in every discussion, collaboration with the VR Counselor and any identified long-term support providers is expected throughout the transition planning process.

66. Customized Employment Service Specifications Payment 4.2: Should we expect to receive multiple authorizations based on where the member is in Customized Employment Service? For example – 'Discovery',

'Job Development, and Negotiations', 'Job Coaching and Stabilization' During hourly service provision will hours be authorized the same way as other services? Can amended authorizations be requested?

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation is currently finalizing authorization and billing procedures for Customized Employment Services. Additional implementation guidance, including processes related to hourly authorizations and amended authorizations, will be provided prior to service implementation.

67. How will the submittal of Customized Employment reporting for billing differ from other RSA services? Will the process be the same. We would like clarification on the timely filing guidelines for initial invoicing and resubmissions, and rates.

A: Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation is currently finalizing authorization and billing procedures for Customized Employment Services. Additional implementation guidance, including processes related to hourly authorizations and amended authorizations, will be provided prior to service implementation.

68. Exhibit AB3 Client Service Plan: Will the Customized Employment Orientation video be provided to vendors to show to families, in the case that they were not shown prior to starting Customized Employment services? Is it still allowed to have meetings with job seekers and families in order to collect information on the Client Service plan form prior to having that official Client Service Planning Meeting?

A: Yes. Providers are encouraged to begin building relationships and gathering information prior to the formal Client Service Planning (CSP) Meeting. Information gathered before the meeting may be used to inform the discussion and development of the CSP. The official CSP Meeting remains the point at which the Customized Employment Team collaboratively develops and finalizes the plan.

69. Service Specifications: 2.3 Vendor Qualifications: No combination of degrees and experience qualifies staff? Only experience counts?

A: Correct. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation intentionally established minimum experience requirements based on demonstrated employment services experience rather than academic degrees. While education may enhance a provider's knowledge and skills, the required qualifications focus on practical experience supporting individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment.

70. CSP: If the client prefers texts and emails as method of contact are these now billable activities?

A: Routine scheduling or administrative communication, such as texts or emails, is not billable as a standalone service.

71. If identified as part of the "customized employment team" then all of those individuals have to be present at bi-monthly meetings in order for the meeting to "count" as a meeting?

A: No. The expectation is that the appropriate team members participate based on the purpose of the meeting and the needs of the VR Client. Not every identified team member is expected to attend every meeting. Providers should document who participated and any relevant follow-up activities.

72. MPR: Is F2F virtual "client facing" checkbox if the client prefers that method of contact for some meetings?

A: Yes. When a virtual meeting occurs directly with the VR Client and is consistent with the approved service delivery requirements, it may be documented as a client-facing interaction. However, Customized Employment is intended to be an in-person service delivered within the VR Client's home and community. Discovery and other Customized Employment activities rely on observing the individual's strengths, interests, support needs, and community connections in real-world settings. Virtual meetings should be used only when appropriate and should not replace the expectation that Customized Employment Services are primarily delivered in person.

73. Employment Profile: This form is 17 pages which is not user friendly or helpful for VRC or vendor Consider report as a summary with the checkboxes as a supplemental form or matrix to create the summary.

A: The Employment Profile is one of the most important deliverables in the Customized Employment process. It serves as the comprehensive summary of Discovery and is intended to provide the foundation for the Customized Employment Team, guide Customized Job Development activities, and support informed decision-making throughout the employment process. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation recognizes the importance of creating documentation that is both meaningful and user-friendly and will continue to consider provider feedback regarding the format and usability of the document as the service evolves.

74. On all forms, why have both a “calendar” and detailed contact 1st date, 2nd date etc.?

These forms have many places for errors with duplication areas such as this.

A: The calendar date reflects the date that the report was completed. The detailed contact dates reflect the various activities, events, observations, that the provider did and what date(s) those activities occurred. These will likely take place at various dates prior to the completion of the full report.

75. What if during the discovery the strengths that are identified are not inline with what the client wants to do?

A: The VR Client’s informed choice remains central. The provider should explore the goal further, identify related tasks or environments, offer additional experiences, and discuss how discovered strengths might support the goal. Discovery should inform choice, not override it.

76. Under the VR client's identified work environment preferences section, each portion of that section should have an other option. the section for client's preferred instructional method should have a option for additional comments.

A: Thank you for this feedback! The additional “Other” option, which allows for a short comment field has been added to the exhibit.

77. Although we do not want to lose track of the VR Client's Dislikes, just wondering if it should be a little farther down on the document?

A: Thank you for this feedback! This update has been made on the exhibit.

78. Who is the main point of contact for discovery?

A: The vendor is the primary point of contact for coordinating and delivering Discovery. The VR Counselor remains responsible for case oversight and authorization.

79. Placement report looks good, if this is attached during the monthly report then that is fine over my feedback above to add to the monthly report. For each of the sections, the vendor should be able to add additional comments on page 2.

A: Thank you for this feedback! This update has been made on the exhibit.

80. How long does the job coach stay on after the client gets stable employment?

A: Job coaching should continue until stabilization criteria are met and the transition to extended or ongoing supports is ready. The duration should reflect individual need rather than a fixed number of weeks.

81. What if supports are needed beyond the 6 months, does that fall to VR or DDD?

A: Supports needed after VR-funded stabilization should transition to the identified extended-services source, such as DDD, behavioral health, TVR services, another funding source, or natural supports. The responsible source depends on eligibility and the approved transition plan.

82. If we choose not to participate at this time due to infrastructure limitations, will this negatively impact us, and will have an opportunity to submit an Interest Form and enroll in the future?

A: Not submitting the Interested Vendor Form at this time will not negatively impact your organization. Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation's goal is to establish a strong foundation for high-quality, consistent service delivery before expanding provider capacity over time. Additional opportunities to participate may be offered as the service continues to expand statewide. In the future when your organization is prepared to offer Customized Employment Services and if the vendor list re-opens for Customized Employment Services, you can submit our Interested Vendor Form for RSA consideration.

83. Do you anticipate this program eventually replacing services such as JDR, WAT, TWE, or other existing Employment Program services?

A: No, Customized Employment Services is its own service and is not replacing JDR, WAT, TWE, or any other existing Employment Program Services.

84. While in-person meetings were strongly emphasized, the exhibits also reference virtual meetings. Can you confirm that conducting up to 50% of meetings virtually is acceptable?

A: When a virtual meeting occurs directly with the VR Client and is consistent with the approved service delivery requirements, it may be documented as a client-facing interaction. However, Customized Employment is intended to be an in-person service delivered within the VR Client's home and community. Discovery and other Customized Employment activities rely on observing the individual's strengths, interests, support needs, and community connections in real-world settings. Virtual meetings should be used only when appropriate and should not replace the expectation that Customized Employment Services are primarily delivered in person.

85. The Senora Excellence video was greatly helpful for us to understand this program better. Will representatives of Senora Excellence or representatives of the agency participating in the pilot program be involved in future trainings or implementation support?

A: The University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities (Sonoran Center) serves as Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation's technical assistance partner and supports provider onboarding, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and implementation activities.

Providers will have access to ongoing technical assistance and implementation support in partnership with the Sonoran Center following onboarding and Arizona Customized Employment (ACE) training.

86. Does Knowledge Services have an estimate of how many clients may qualify for this program, and do you anticipate that clients currently receiving Employment Program services will transition into this model?

A: Eligibility for Customized Employment Services is determined by the designated VR Counselor based on the VR Client's individualized needs, informed choice, and employment goal. For this reason, Knowledge Services would not have an estimate of how many VR Clients qualify for this program. The VR Clients that participated in the pilot program are expected to continue with Customized Employment services once transitioned under the MSP Program.